ITEM 2-F

CITY OF TORONTO
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

640/08002
C & N (West)
January 18, 1982

To: City of Toronto Planning Board

Subject: Discussion Paper on Public Participation in Planning

Origin: City of Toronto Planning Board, December 12, 1977 (discussionr:171)

Comments:

The following report is the result of the City of Toronto Planning Board's Public Participation Project. Although there has been, over the years, a great deal of public participation on many issues both at the Planning Board and at City Council, a written policy context for the various participation models and processes has been missing. The Part I Official Plan outlines general planning goals and land use policies for the City of Toronto without mentioning the role of the public in establishing and implementing them. This report attempts to fill the gap. It is meant to stimulate debate about public participation in planning and programme implementation among planners and other civic officials, the Planning Board, City Council and the public at large.

The report is divided into ten Sections which outline the background of the Public Participation Project, make recommendations regarding Official Plan statements on public participation, suggest additional policies which should be adopted by City Council and discusses ways and means through which public participation in planning can be achieved. Finally, staff implications are outlined, preliminary recommendations are summarized and a process for public debate is suggested. It is expected that once this debate has been completed, perhaps by June of 1982, a final report will be brought forward with specific recommendations for action.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That this report, with a request for comments, be made available to groups and individuals on the Planning Board's mailing lists and to those who have, in the past, expressed an interest to be involved in the project on public participation in planning.

2. That the Planning Board hold a public meeting to discuss this report and that the Commissioner of Planning and Development

be requested to report on the date for such a meeting at the Board's regular meeting on March 1, 1982.

3. That the Commissioner of Planning and Development be authorized to consult with other City Departments on the procedures suggested in this report.

4. That following the public meeting and the consultation with other City Departments, the Commissioner of Planning and Development prepare a final report recommending:

   (a) Official Plan statements on Public Participation in Planning and Programme Implementation;

   (b) additional City Council policies on the subject;

   (c) the publication of a "handbook" on public participation in the City of Toronto.

Stephen G. McLaughlin,
Commissioner.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The following report is the result of the City of Toronto Planning Board's Public Participation Project. Although there has been, over the years, a great deal of public participation on many issues both at the Planning Board and at City Council, a written policy context for the various participation models and processes has been missing. The Part I Official Plan outlines general planning goals and land use policies for the City of Toronto without mentioning the role of the public in establishing and implementing them. This report attempts to fill the gap. It is meant to stimulate debate about public participation in planning and programme implementation among planners and other civic officials, the Planning Board, City Council and the public at large.

The report is divided into ten Sections which outline the background of the Public Participation Project, make recommendations regarding Official Plan statements on public participation, suggest additional policies which should be adopted by City Council and discusses ways and means through which public participation in planning can be achieved. Finally, staff implications are outlined, preliminary recommendations are summarized and a process for public debate is suggested. It is expected that once this debate has been completed, perhaps by June of 1982, a final report will be brought forward with specific recommendations for action.

2. BACKGROUND

In December, 1977 the Planning Board adopted the following recommendation:

> "That staff be requested to work with the Board's Sub-committee on Citizen Participation to prepare a report on public participation in the planning process, and that the staff report be brought back to the Board through the Sub-committee."

At that time the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto had just released its final report, which touched on the subject of public participation in municipal decision-making. As well, the Planning Act Review Committee had just published its report recommending against a mandatory statement on public participation in municipal Official Plans. In its submission the City of Toronto had argued in favour of such a requirement.

Throughout 1978 and the first half of 1979 a group of planners on staff worked with the Planning Board's Subcommittee to produce (a) a research approach, (b) a discussion paper outlining general principles and assumptions underlying public participation in planning in the City of Toronto, and, (c) a selection of case studies representing different types of planning situations. On two occasions, a general letter describing the work of the Subcommittee and inviting comments and suggestions was mailed to people and organizations included in existing Planning Board mailing lists (some 1,000 names) and to those who had expressed an interest to be involved (some 80-100 names).

The twenty-seven case studies selected covered a wide range of planning situations including Part II planning studies, general land use issues, site-specific rezonings, Neighbourhood Improvement Programme areas and projects, Cityhome developments and social policy issues. In order to classify the information concerning each case study, open-ended questionnaires were developed for planners and for people in the community who had been part of one of the case study processes selected. The questionnaires were sent to one or two planners per case study and two to four community representatives. To facilitate community response the community questionnaire was shorter than that distributed to planners.

Although the completed questionnaires provided some interesting insights into the varying perceptions among participants, the results could not be easily quantified and were not statistically valid. Specific conclusions applicable to a large number of planning situations were difficult to arrive at.

However, the case studies confirmed a number of informally held opinions about public participation in the planning process. Most of the planning studies had taken a long time to complete, with an average of four years of public involvement. The great majority of people had become involved because they wanted to have a say in the decisions affecting their neighbourhoods and to improve or protect their areas. Many felt that their participation had improved the planning process. Planning site offices were seen as information and resource centres which can provide access to local government and publicize ongoing planning work. Since the average planning process was long, many other municipal issues were raised

and dealt with in the context of the various planning studies. This was accepted as a legitimate and necessary consequence of extensive public involvement.

Planners generally agreed that the public participation process had influenced the outcome of planning studies and that it had changed the way decisions had been made. They were critical of the time it took to complete the studies and recognized that almost all public processes had tended to be dominated by people who, at least to some extent, already knew how to manipulate "the system" to their advantage. There was a strong conviction that public participation processes should not be governed by rigid structures, but that they should be moulded to fit the situation at hand. Conflicts among participants and between participants and planners were seen as positive aspects. However, planners felt that participants believed that the community had real decision-making power, when, in fact, it did not.

Overall, however, planners remained optimistic about public participation in planning, valuing it highly despite its limitations.

3. A PHILOSOPHY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING

In order to establish and critically evaluate public participation models and processes it is necessary to begin with a philosophical framework. While this framework may not be shared universally it lays the ground rules and enables a more informed debate of the issue of public involvement in planning and programme implementation to take place.

People have participated in the planning efforts of the City of Toronto for a long time. In fact, many of the formal procedures used today, such as the distribution of summaries of planning reports, the polling of residents and general public meetings to discuss policy alternatives, have been in existence since the late 1950's. However, opposition to a number of urban renewal projects in the early 1960's resulted in an Ontario government policy making public participation a requirement for receiving financial assistance. The first official community working committees were established in Alexandra Park, Don Mount Village, Trefann Court and Don Vale.

The 1966 Official Plan for the City of Toronto in tune with the thinking of the day, recommended medium and high density residential redevelopment in many neighbourhoods and large amounts of additional retail and office space in many commercial areas. When it began to be implemented, opposition to individual projects changed the character of public participation in Toronto. Many

people who had not taken part in municipal decision-making in the past demanded to be involved.

During 1973 the City's planning staff was reorganized and nearly doubled in number. In tune with, and in response to, the demand for greater public participation, a separate Community and Neighbourhoods Division was created among planning staff with a strong commitment to involving people in City neighbourhoods in the planning of their communities. Throughout the 1970's task forces, working committees and planning groups operated in different planning situations with varying degrees of success. But, outside of the formal requirements of the Planing Act and the City of Toronto Planning Board's Rules and Procedures which include notification requirements, there are no written policies governing public participation in planning in the City of Toronto.

3.1 Definitions

The "public" is made up of many different socio-economic and interest groups with different degrees of power as well as individuals who cannot or do not want to be identified with any particular group. A useful definition of "public participation" regards the process as an act of sharing in the formulation of policies and proposals, "a means by which people who are not elected or appointed officials of agencies and government influence decisions about programmes and policies which affect their lives."

In the context of the City of Toronto, "planning", in a narrow sense, has centred mainly around land use issues and their environmental and social implications. Rather than the never achievable ideal concept of planning as the rational and detached determination of future actions through a sequence of choices, land use planning in Toronto (and in most other North American cities) is limited to establishing general guidelines and specific regulations, largely in response to private decisions taken in the marketplace. In a way, private individuals, who themselves do a great deal of planning, are the ones who implement planning strategies through very specific land use decisions. Thus, municipal planning is cast into the role of co-ordinating the actions of private individuals and organizations.

Recently, municipal planning activities have broadened as the emphasis has shifted to policy and programme implementation. There has been a realization that if any of the City's land use policies are to be meaningful in the long run, the municipality would have to make a commitment to invest manpower and funds to implement these policies. The City's Housing Department is the most prominent example of this, but there has been also a renewed emphasis in such areas as social services, commercial strip

improvement, industrial development, and recreation facilities planning.

3.2 The Purpose of Public Participation in Planning

Planning decisions, public and private, influence the quality of people's lives and may change their social and physical environments. There is a widely supported tradition in Toronto which holds that people have a right to participate in the making of those decisions which directly affect them. It is the degree and the quality of participation which is often in dispute, especially when the interests of the proponent of a scheme are diametrically opposed to those of the people in the area affected.

In addition to the principle of public involvement as a right, public participation in planning tends to produce more well rounded results. Planners, developers, owners and tenants and other people living and working in communities or otherwise involved in an issue, possess different types of knowledge. All of this knowledge is needed to make planning decisions. Even if "better" decisions do not result from this knowledge, depending on one's point-of-view, participants will be able to judge how these decisions have been arrived at.

A participatory process which solicits and receives a broad expression from a wide variety of interests is also likely to produce more acceptable decisions. Such decisions will meet with less distrust and will, perhaps, be supported and implemented to a greater degree. All of this assumes, of course, that the public process will not be allowed, in the long run, to be misused by any one of the participants.

Participation in planning contributes to people's knowledge of how government operates and how decisions are made and implemented. Well informed people are more likely to identify with an area or a planning issue and the more people participate the better they will be able to participate. A stronger and more effective community or interest group will be better able to act rather than to react or be "acted upon".

Public participation in planning can make everyone involved in decision-making more accountable. A civic administration, working exclusively within a bureaucratic structure is accountable for its decisions only through the formal political process, except in special circumstances. Without any public scrutiny, the decision making process can easily be manipulated by any one particular interest to the exclusion of others.

A participatory planning process can keep people informed about planning issues in their neighbourhood, even when no major

decisions are to be made or when people have decided not to participate in the decision-making regarding a specific area or issue.

Public policy planning is aimed at protecting the City from arbitrary decisions by any particular interest group. A public participation process can focus on the issues which are important to people in a community and which ought to be examined. Also, if in order to implement its policies a municipality commits itself to public investments, the kind of investment should be determined through a public process. This process should involve as many different groups and individuals as possible. Planning staff can help articulate the interests of those groups or individuals who cannot do it themselves. As well, local initiative should be fostered.

3.3 Who Should Participate

People interested in a general planning issue or living, working or owning property or businesses in an area as well as organizations, institutions, etc. should be able to participate in the City's planning and implementation processes. This includes residents' and ratepayers' associations and other organized interest groups, workers, business people, industrialists, public and private agencies, elected and appointed officials and representatives from other City departments and other levels of government. But, it also includes individuals who neither belong to nor identify with a particular group and whose interests may differ greatly from those represented by organizations. Some of these participants may have to be made aware of the process and may need some encouragement to become involved.

Planners in a participatory process can be involved to varying degrees. The extent of their involvement and the co-ordinating role which they often assume are defined both by the particular planning issue or area and by the bureaucratic and political context in which they operate. As well, planners have a professional and technical knowledge and a responsibility to represent an independent point-of-view. The co-ordinating role gives planners a chance to act as catalysts in the participatory process, initiating and maintaining it, if necessary. Eventually, the process should lead to a reduced role for planners and to an increase in the tasks people in a community can accomplish on their own.

The fact that planners play an enabling role in participatory planning does not imply that they ought to relate to all of the participating groups and individuals in the same way. Planning staff should use its limited resources to keep everyone interested equally informed. However, planners should try to ensure that

those groups and individuals who are the "weakest" participants in the process, have equal access to the system. They may not be organized or they may lack the time, skills or self-confidence to be actively involved. Often planners will have to make a special effort to make certain that the public process reflects their concerns. It is assumed of course, that there will always be people who are not interested in an issue or area and will therefore, choose not to participate.

3.4 Who Participates

People most directly affected by an issue are most likely to participate in the public debate, especially when they feel threatened by whatever is proposed. However, to get involved, even in these circumstances, seems to require some familiarity with how government operates as well as some degree of confidence that one's efforts will not be completely futile.

Often, a public participation process is dominated by "professional" people who are better educated, accustomed to operating in a public forum and who have time to devote to such activities. In addition, leaders of local groups frequently regard all planning and programme implementation issues which affect the area they represent with proprietory interest.

During the past few years the extent of public participation in relation to planning and development issues seems to have decreased. There seem to have been fewer controversial planning issues which lend themselves to a resolution at the municipal level. Instead, public attention seems to have shifted towards the services provided by schools and libraries. As a result, the overall number of participants in public processes related to planning has decreased. This has created a situation where a small number of people with certain professional and political expertise tend to be involved in many major planning issues.

It can safely be assumed that professional people, leaders of local groups and individuals interested in municipal issues cannot, on their own, represent a complete crossection of local concerns. Both in the past and at present certain groups and individuals have not been part of most public participation processes. It takes a special effort to reach and to identify the concerns of children and young people, of people who are poor or handicapped, of local businessmen or minority groups of all kinds.

3.5 Levels of Participation

"Participation" has different meanings for different people. It may be used to describe voting in municipal elections or receiving information about a certain issue or sharing in a decision-making process. In order to clarify the matter for the purposes of this report various levels of participation are summarized below. As with any theoretical concept the boundaries between them are somewhat arbitrary, but all refer to regular contact and communication between members of the public and planning staff, other civic officials and elected representatives.

There are a number of models which describe various levels of participation. They include the following: information, consultation, advising, partnership or joint planning, delegated authority and control. All of these are cumulative, that is each one subsumes the preceding one(s).

a. Information:

Although informing the public about planning and implementation issues is the first step towards participation, it is essentially a one-way communication system. Generally, a decision has been made, no feedback is expected and opportunities for participation are limited to minor adjustments or formal objections.

However, information dissemination is a very important component of any public involvement process. Popular versions of technical reports, explanatory notes, etc. in languages other than English appropriate to the areas affected go a long way in making sure the information provided is understood.

b. Consultation:

Consultation can also be a meaningful step towards participation, but is limited if it is the only method to be applied. It assumes that the basic planning or implementation approach chosen is acceptable. Consultation generally takes place just prior to the final approval stage. Although there is an opportunity to express opinions, major changes are unlikely.

c. Advising:

Advising as a form of public participation implies more frequent contact and some specified role for the participants. This and the following levels of participation tend to begin early on in a public process when alternatives are being weighed, options are established, etc. Because of this, major

adjustments in the planning and implementation approach are possible. However, the very term "advising" also indicates that the approving agency can choose whether or not to act on the advice given.

d. Partnership or Joint Planning:

The term implies some equality among participants. In a joint planning situation people who participate do not make the final decisions but are responsible for certain parts of the decision-making process. Without some degree of consensus at the local level this form of participation cannot be successful.

e. Delegated Authority:

This approach transfers responsibility for a particular aspect of planning or implementation to a group of people concerned with an issue or area. It assumes some degree of decentralization of municipal decision-making.

f. Control:

Control of a public planning and implementation process implies independence from local government and the ability to raise funds to hire staff, pay for office expenses, etc. Like delegated authority, it requires decentralization of municipal decision-making.

In Toronto, neither of the extremes, that is mere one-way communication or complete control of the decision-making process regarding an area or an issue, have been the norm in the past. "Delegated authority" has also been rare, except in cases like community centres administered by a publicly elected Board of Directors.

Various planning processes have been purported to be based on the "partnership or joint planning" model. However, upon closer analysis it appears that most of them would have to be classified as "advisory". Whenever serious differences arose between the individuals or groups and the planner or other civic officials, the official viewpoint usually prevailed.

Rather than aiming to change the participatory models now in use in Toronto, it seems more appropriate to make the "consultation" and "advising" models work as well as possible to achieve the goals contained in the Official Plan statements on Public Participation in Planning suggested below.

4. PROPOSED DRAFT OFFICIAL PLAN STATEMENTS

Although Official Plan statements on public participation in themselves do nothing to ensure that a meaningful participatory process is being followed, their absence can be taken as a signal that a municipality is not interested in involving its citizens in its planning and implementation efforts. Official Plan statements validate the public processes used and constitute a formal public commitment.

It is recommended that Section 8, "Implementation", of Part I of the Official Plan be amended by incorporating the following statements:

"8.3

(a) It is the policy of Council to support and encourage participation by residents, business people, industrialists, workers, property owners, institutions and other organizations in the City of Toronto in the development of planning and programme implementation policies through such processes as: the formulation of Part I and Part II planning statements, the completion of area planning studies, and the review of specific housing and other development proposals, parks and recreation facilities and programmes, transportation services and public improvement programmes and projects.

It is the policy of Council that public participation will extend to the implementation of any or all of the objectives and policies of the Part I and Part II Official Plans.

(b) Council will recognize the rights of individuals and groups to be involved in planning and programme implementation decisions and will take appropriate measures to ensure that the public is well informed to participate as effectively as possible.

In order to facilitate public participation in planning and implementation issues Council will employ methods at varying stages of the decision-making process such as, but not limited to: deputations at Committees of Council and the Planning Board, formal and informal public meetings, open houses, workshops, displays, area or City-wide advertising, working committees, task forces and neighbourhood advisory committees."

5. PLANNING BOARD RULES AND PROCEDURES

The City of Toronto Planning Board is required to hold public meetings on applications for Official Plan Amendments under the Planning Act. In the Background Section of the Board's Rules and Procedures, May 5, 1980, it reiterates its mandate concerning public participation in planning as follows:

> "In carrying out its mandate, the Board has to provide a public forum for discussion on the issues as they arise. In addition to the need to keep the public well informed through the preparation, and distribution of relevant information on a continuing basis, is the organization of meetings, to enable the public to speak, and debate the issues of the day."

Sections 4 and 5 of the Rules and Procedures deal with deputations at Board meetings and with notification of the public in advance of public meetings. The notification procedures are at present under review. Since issues raised in this context have a direct bearing on many of the suggested procedures in this report, it is recommended that the report on Notification of Public meetings be discussed in conjunction with the public discussion of this report.

6. COUNCIL POLICIES ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Public participation procedures adopted by City Council do not only involve the Department of Planning and Development but also other civic agencies such as the Library Board, the Public Works Department, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Public Health Department, the Committee of Adjustment, etc. Over the past few years the Library Board has gone through extensive participatory processes regarding the future development of the library system and alterations and additions to individual library services and buildings. The Public Works Department, through the City Clerk's Office, undertakes a public process for front yard parking applications and the Department of Parks and Recreation establishes and maintains Advisory Councils at most of the City's recreation centres. Generally, policies of this kind are worked out in relation to a particular issue, such as the recent discussion about the use of City boulevard space for sidewalk cafes.

This report is not the proper setting in which to comment on the wide range of procedures currently in use. In any event, some of these issues should be addressed in the forthcoming report of the Community Task Force on Neighbourhood, Social and Recreational Services. However, all public processes administered by civic departments and agencies should, in future, be based on the

principles embodied in the Official Plan statements recommended above.

A number of public processes in planning situations which involve civic departments other than the Planning and Development Department in a major way, are often co-ordinated by planning staff. Examples are local area traffic studies and traffic control plans, technical planning studies like the Central Area Parking and Loading Study, a new recreation centre, etc. Because of their background and experience in public participation and because these are local area issues, planners are frequently the most appropriate people to co-ordinate such processes.

There are some planning situations within the purview of the Planning and Development Department for which the Planning Act does not require a participatory process, but where it has been customary in the City of Toronto to involve the public. Council should formally recognize some of these processes as outlined below.

6.1 Development Review

Under Section 40 (formerly 35(a)) of the Planning Act Council can, in designated areas, review development plans with regard to siting, massing, access/egress, landscaping, parking and loading, lighting and walkways. These powers are based on the assumption that the impact of a new development in certain areas of the City is such that it warrants municipal review, even though the project may conform in every respect with existing Official Plan and zoning provisions. Also, a recommendation to designate a section of the City as an area of site-plan control has usually resulted from some kind of public process initiated by the community, the local Ward Aldermen or as part of a planning study.

In most cases Ward Aldermen and local area planners are notified when an application for Development Review has been received. It is left to their discretion as to whether or not to initiate public discussion of the application. This is appropriate, since they are generally in the best position to determine the degree of public interest or concern.

Even if in their judgement no public process is required, they may decide occassionally to make Development Review reports deputation items on Council Committee agendas. Prior to the meeting the Committee secretary, in consultation with planning staff, notifies local organizations and interested individuals. There is, of course, no separate public process, if the Development Review is part of a rezoning or an Official Plan amendment application.

Whichever public process a planner, in consultation with the Ward Aldermen, chooses, the reasons for it and its results should be part of the Development Review report. It is recommended that reports on Development Review applications which have followed some kind of public participation process contain a discussion of this and its results.

6.2 Rezonings

The Planning Act requires Council to give notice of the rezoning of a property only after a by-law to this effect has been passed. However, Council customarily requests a public meeting to be held when a preliminary report on a rezoning application is being discussed. This process gives people an opportunity to comment at an early stage.

There is, however, a seldom enforced requirement which seems to be a useful component of any public participation process. As part of the rezoning application an applicant is required to provide a sign describing the application and post it on the property in question. The same goes for applications for amendments to the Official Plan. This procedure can go a long way towards ensuring that people who live near the property are aware of the application and can obtain information on the project, if they wish. Since planning staff have to visit the sites in question in any event, they should notify the Department of Buildings and Inspections to enforce this requirement.

It is recommended that the rezoning and Official Plan amendment application requirement of posting a sign on the property affected be enforced by the Department of Buildings and Inspections on the advice of planning staff in every instance.

6.3 Committee of Adjustment Applications

The Committee of Adjustment operates under Section 49 (formerly 42) of the Planning Act. For a severance and/or minor variance application residents within 400 feet of the property are notified of the date of the public hearing which will deal with the application(s). The Committee's decisions are made in the context of existing City policies and planning staff comment from time to time in favour of or against certain applications.

Occasionally, applications to the Committee involve many variances, each of them minor in nature, but adding up to a significant impact on surrounding residents and/or businesses. As during the Development Review process, Ward Aldermen and/or local area planners use their discretion to determine whether a public process is necessary. This is appropriate, but planners should make this decision consciously in every instance.

It is recommended that in the case of Committee of Adjustment applications which can have a significant impact on surrounding areas the Commissioner of Planning and Development, in consultation with the Ward Aldermen, consider the appropriateness of some form of broader public participation.

6.4 Restrictive By-laws Other Than Rezonings

In addition to site-specific and area rezonings, Council regulates land use in the City of Toronto through general amendments to the Zoning By-law (Sections 2 and 4), permissive or restrictive exemptions from the Zoning By-Law for individual properties or areas (Section 16) and through by-laws separate from the Zoning By-law dealing with a particular issue such as the Condominium Conversion By-law, the Non-Residential Standards By-law, the Noise By-law or the Smoking By-law. Not all of the latter by-laws involve work by the Planning and Development Department. However, all of them have a significant impact on people living in the City and issues like these should be subject to public scrutiny. As in other processes, the decision on the kind of public participation has to be discretionary. However, the choice should be made consciously in every instance.

It is recommended that reports introducing general amendments and permissive or restrictive exemptions to the Zoning By-law as well as reports on by-laws regarding a particular issue contain a brief discussion of the public participation process which was followed and its results.

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF OFFICIAL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING

The following section describes ways and means to implement the specific policy recommendations for public participation in planning and programme implementation put forward in Sections 4 to 6 above.

7.1 Methods

Experience of planning staff, confirmed by the case studies done for this project, indicates that, in all cases, participatory methods have to be tailored to the planning situation in question. As well, in any given planning situation, a number of different methods have to be used to make the process successful.

7.1.1 Information Dissemination

The dissemination of all kinds of information is an important component of various styles of participatory planning. While all available information should be accessible to people who request

it, information to be distributed should be tailored to the issues at hand and should be clear and concise and readily understandable. This may often necessitate translation into various languages. Whether or not this information will be used effectively depends on how the issues are presented and on the degree of interest and the level of participation in any planning issue or area.

Also, it is vitally important that people who have been involved in a planning issue are kept up-to-date on decisions that have been made or are about to be made. Frequently, the official actions of Council and of Council Committees, on certain planning issues expressed in formal motions are incomprehensible to a lay person, even if he/she has been closely involved.

At present, the the City Clerk's Department reports the actions taken verbatim. Thus, in cases where there is a mailing list, notices sent to interested groups and individuals are often misunderstood and result in numerous telephone conversations with various civic officials. It would be more efficient if the notices mailed from the City Clerk's office contained one or two easily readable paragraphs describing, in lay terms, what had occurred at Council or at Council Committees or what was about to happen, in the case of a letter announcing a deputation item. These explanatory paragraphs could be prepared in consultation with appropriate staff members from other departments, much in the same manner in which informal consultation between these civic officials takes place now.

If an issue has been very controversial and there is a very extensive mailing list a separate, brief, easy to read, explanatory note should be prepared by the Department which had carriage of the issue and should be included in the City Clerk's mailing. This explanatory note should contain the name and telephone number of the staff member to be contacted for further information.

7.1.2. <u>Deputations at Committees of Council and at the Planning Board</u>

Formal deputations at a regular or special meeting of a committee of Council or the Planning Board have a place in the public process, but are a very limited and formal form of participation. In order to feel confident enough to speak on such an occasion, deputants who are not speaking in a professional capacity must be familiar with the operations of municipal government to some extent. As well, the timing and location of Committee meetings with "deputation items" tends to discourage attendance. The Planning Board meets usually in the evenings. Committees of Council might pursue the possibility of dealing with controversial

deputation items always at a time when as many people as possible are able to attend, i.e. after 5.00 p.m. On occasion, when it is evident that discussion of an issue is likely to take several hours, Committees of Council might consider holding special meetings in the affected neighbourhood(s) with two or three Committee members in attendance, similar to present Planning Board practice.

7.1.3 Individual Contacts

Door-to-door canvassing in areas of the City which lack an organizational base is one way of identifying people who might be interested in a participatory planning process. Contacts with local area schools, clubs and associations also serve to raise issues which are important to the area. Guided tours can highlight specific problems/conflicts in an area and personal interviews/questionnaires may provide more detailed information. Planning site offices can be a good base from which to carry out these activities.

7.1.4 Flyers, Newspapers, Newspaper Advertisements, Displays, Open Houses, Workshops

Newspaper advertisements are probably the least effective of all participatory methods because they are required to use legalistic language and are limited by available space. They tend to appear on one or two days in an obscure section of one or two daily newspapers. They are also very expensive. If they are read, it generally is a fortunate accident. Except for purely technical by-law amendments advertisements should never be used as the only form of "participation", although they might complement other methods.

Flyers, newspapers, displays, open houses and workshops can all be useful components of a participatory planning process. With good graphics and easily understandable handouts planning issues can be illustrated in a way that makes informed public comment possible.

7.1.5 Task Forces/Working Committees

Many of the case studies completed for this project commented on the effectiveness of task forces or working committees. Such a group seems to be appropriate for a longer term planning and/or implementation process. On many occasions in the past attempts have been made to ensure representation of all the interest groups concerned in one study group. The underlying assumption has been that planning could be done by consensus. In practice, this has not been achieved. Once final choices had to be made various interests turned out to be fundamentally in conflict with one another.

7.1.6 Meetings

Small and large public meetings constitute the bulk of the participatory processes local area planners are involved in. Such meetings can be a very important, and sometimes the only form of public participation. In order to make them successful, however, a fair degree of preparation is necessary.

Timing and location are crucial. In most areas of the City meetings continuing past 10.00 p.m. will lose most of their audience. Sometimes, they may have to be held in the mornings to accommodate people on shift work. A meeting on a hockey/baseball night, during a snowstorm or conflicting with other community events will yield fewer useful results. As well, meetings held in the City Hall about east or westend issues will not attract the same number and variety of people as those held in a local church or school.

Aside from timing and location, the way issues are presented will determine the outcome of a meeting. A presentation full of jargon, in English only in a predominantly non-English speaking neighbourhood, is likely to cause frustration rather than feedback. Prolonged slide shows tend to put people to sleep.

Even in the best of circumstances large public meetings can be intimidating for people who attend. Active participation may be discouraged by the use of microphones or by the presence of people whose opinions are perceived to carry more weight. In some cases such meetings chiefly serve as a forum for the dissemination of information about a particular issue.

Public meetings, perhaps more than any other method of public participation, are open to manipulation of every kind from every one of the participating actors. This includes civic officials who have their own biases which influence the presentation and discussion of issues.

7.2 Methods of Participation in Different Planning Situations

As previously stated, different planning situations require different methods of participation. In each case the planner or other civic official involved has to make a choice.

It might be useful to summarize all of these methods and the principles of how they should be applied in a "handbook" on public participation in planning and programme implementation for public distribution.

7.2.1 Site-Specific Studies

In the case of an application to the Committee of Adjustment which raises substantial planning concerns the current practice of an informal canvassing of neighbours followed by a small meeting is a useful way to determine neighbourhood concerns.

The occassional application for Development Review which Ward Aldermen and local area planners consider significant enough follows the same route. Additionally, it is sometimes necessary to solicit the comments of special interest group(s) in the area, if, for example, a historic building is involved or if there have been long-standing concerns regarding streetscape, public access, etc.

Given some of the limitations of large public meetings outlined above the current practice of calling one or two of them to discuss a rezoning application may need to be diversified. Depending on the scale of the application, it may be necessary to organize a number of smaller meetings or even make individual contacts to get a better understanding of local area concerns. In some cases it may be appropriate to establish a working committee with representation from various interest groups.

Site-specific exemptions to the Zoning By-law through Section 16 restricting or widening the permitted uses of a property should be treated in the same manner as regular rezoning applications.

7.2.2 Major Projects and Area Studies

Area studies may lead to Part I Official Plan Amendments, Part II Plans, specific zoning provisions, general industrial, commercial or residential area improvement schemes and the expansion of municipal "hard" and "soft" services. Major projects may be planned and developed in stages. Both are long-term undertakings and may require a combination of all of the participatory methods outlined above. At the beginning of a process, informal canvassing, attendance at meetings of local groups and contacts with schools are useful. Questionnaires/interviews may be employed to survey a specific group of people or to collect individual opinions which can then be collectively assessed. Displays, guided tours, open houses and meetings can be used to test preliminary findings.

Working committees may be established to act in an advisory capacity and provide a continuing liaison with the community. Depending on the planning situation, these committees may have representation from one interest group only or from a number of groups.

It is important that in the case of area studies various participatory methods are employed, since none can be expected to discover and include everyone interested and/or affected.

7.2.3 General City-Wide Policies

Planning studies for new general Official Plan and zoning policies, and general control by-laws relating to specific issues have often been completed with a minimum or no public participation. The reasons are easily seen. Stimulating interest in more abstract concepts which do not appear to be of immediate concern to a large number of people is difficult and time-consuming. However, that does not mean that it should not be done.

Given the natural limitations of any City-wide process there are examples of more or less successful public debates on some issues such as the group homes by-law, the initial Central Area Parking and Loading Study Proposals, amendments to the lodging house licensing by-law, and the density bonus for senior citizens housing.

Good dissemination of information through flyers, displays, the media, etc., availability of civic officials to attend regular meetings of all kinds of groups, one or more meetings in various districts of the City and a centrally located wrap-up session can stimulate debate sufficiently to produce valuable comments. As well, one or more reference groups could be established to vet the opinions expressed.

8. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

Since almost all of the participation processes and procedures suggested above are in use now, in one form or another, the adoption of this report should not result in additional staff requirements. However, if in carrying out the policies, it becomes clear that more staff is needed to implement the City's objectives for public participation and programme implementation, this issue will have to be addressed. It is recommended that, if all the recommendations in this report are adopted, the staff implications of the proposed procedures be monitored for the period of one year by the Departments affected.

9. DISCUSSION OF THIS REPORT

This report should be sent for comment to other City Departments such as Buildings and Inspections, Legal, Public Health, Parks and Recreation, the City Clerk's and the Housing Departments. In addition, the report should be made available to all groups and individuals on the Planning Board's mailing lists and to those who

have, in the past, expressed an interest to be involved in the project on public participation in planning.

The Planning Board should hold a public meeting to discuss this report.

Following the public meeting and the consultation with other City Departments, a final report should recommend Official Plan statements on Public Participation in Planning, additional policies to be formally adopted as resolutions of City Council and a "handbook" on public participation in planning containing some of the principles on which public participation policies in Toronto are based and suggested "do's" and "don't's" of the various participatory processes.

10. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3. A PHILOSOPHY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING

3.5 Levels of Participation

Rather than aiming to change the participatory models now in use in Toronto, it seems more appropriate to make the "consultation" and "advising" models work as well as possible to achieve the goals contained in the proposed Official Plan statements.

4. PROPOSED DRAFT OFFICIAL PLAN STATEMENTS

It is recommended that Section 8, "Implementation", of Part I of the Official Plan be amended by incorporating the following statements:

"8.3

(a) It is the policy of Council to support and encourage participation by residents, business people, industrialists, workers, property owners, institutions and other organizations in the City of Toronto in the development of planning and programme implementation policies through such processes as: the formulation of Part I and Part II planning statements, the completion of area planning studies, and the review of specific housing and other development proposals, parks and recreation facilities and programmes, transportation services and public improvement programmes and projects.

It is the policy of Council that public participation will extend to the implementation of

any or all of the objectives and policies of the Part I and Part II Official Plans.

(b) Council will recognize the rights of individuals and groups to be involved in planning and programme implementation decisions and will take appropriate measures to ensure that the public is well informed to participate as effectively as possible.

In order to facilitate public participation in planning and implementation issues Council will employ methods at various stages of the decision-making process such as, but not limited to: deputations at Committees of Council and the Planning Board, formal and informal public meetings, open houses, workshops, displays, area or City-wide advertising, working committees, task forces and neighbourhood advisory committees."

5. PLANNING BOARD RULES AND PROCEDURES

It is recommended that the forthcoming report on Notification of Public meetings be discussed in conjunction with the public discussion of this Discussion Paper on Public Participation.

6. COUNCIL POLICIES ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Development Review

It is recommended that reports on Development Review applications which have followed some kind of public participation process contain a discussion of this process and its results.

6.2 Rezonings

It is recommended that the rezoning and Official Plan amendment application requirement of posting a sign on the property affected be enforced by the Department of Buildings and Inspections on the advice of planning staff in every instance.

6.3 Committee of Adjustment Applications

It is recommended that in the case of Committee of Adjustment applications which can have a significant impact on surrounding areas the Commissioner of Planning and Development, in consultation with the Ward Aldermen, consider

the appropriateness of some form of broader public participation.

6.4 Restrictive By-Laws Other Than Rezonings

It is recommended that reports introducing general amendments and permissive or restrictive exemptions to the Zoning By-Law as well as reports on by-laws regarding a particular issue contain a brief discussion of the public participation process which was followed and its results.

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF OFFICIAL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING

7.1 Methods

7.1.1 Information Dissemination

It is recommended that the notices mailed from the City Clerk's office to interested groups and individuals contain one or two easily readable paragraphs describing what has occurred at Council or at Council Committees or what is about to happen, in the case of a letter announcing a deputation item.

If an issue has been very controversial and there is a very extensive mailing list, a separate, brief, easy to read, explanatory note should be prepared by the Department which had carriage of the issue and should be included in the City Clerk's mailing.

7.1.2 Deputations at Committees of Council and at the Planning Board

Committees of Council might pursue the possibility of dealing with controversial deputation items always at a time when as many people as possible are able to attend, i.e. after 5:00 p.m. On occasion, when it is evident that discussion of an issue is likely to take several hours, Committees of Council might consider holding special meetings in the affected neighbourhood(s) with two or three Committee members in attendance, similar to present Planning Board practice.

8. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

It is recommended that, if all of the recommendations in this report are adopted, the staff implications of the proposed procedures be monitored for the period of one year by the Departments affected.

9. DISCUSSION OF THIS REPORT

This report should be sent for comment to other City Departments such as Buildings and Inspections, Legal, Public Health, Parks and Recreation, the City Clerk's and the Housing Departments. In addition, the report should be made available to all groups and individuals on the Planning Board's mailing lists and to those who have, in the past, expressed an interest to be involved in the project on public participation in planning.

The Planning Board should hold a public meeting to discuss this report.

Following the public meeting and the consultation with other City Departments, a final report should recommend Official Plan statements on Public Participation in Planning, additional policies to be formally adopted as resolutions of City Council and a "handbook" on public participation in planning containing some of the principles on which public participation policies in Toronto are based and suggested "do's" and "don'ts" of the various participatory processes.

Conclusion:

This report is the result of the City of Toronto Planning Board's "Public Participation Project." Throughout 1978 and the first half of 1979 a group of planners on staff worked with the Board's Sub-committee on Citizen Participation on this project. Eventually, twenty-seven case studies covering a large range of planning situations were completed. Although they provided some interesting insights, the results could not be easily quantified and were not statistically valid. It was difficult to generalize from the conclusions.

People have participated in the planning efforts of the City of Toronto for a long time. But outside of the formal requirements of the Planning Act and the Planning Board's Rules and Procedures which include notification requirements there are no written policies governing public participation in planning in the City of Toronto.

There is a widely supported tradition in Toronto which holds that people have a right to participate in the making of those decisions which directly affect them. Public participation in planning also tends to produce more well-rounded results and contributes to people's knowledge of how government operates and how decisions are made and implemented. People interested in a general planning issue or living, working or owning property or businesses in an area as well as organizations, institutions, etc.

should be able to participate in the City's planning and implementation processes.

Rather than aiming to change the participatory model now in use in the City of Toronto, it seems more appropriate to make the "consultation" and "advising" models work as well as possible to achieve the goals contained in the proposed Official Plan statements.

Although Official Plan statements on public participation in themselves do nothing to ensure that a meaningful participatory process is being followed, their absence can be taken as a signal that a municipality is not interested in involving its citizens in its planning and implementation efforts. It is recommended that Section 8, "Implementation" of the Official Plan be amended by adding the statements outlined in the body of this report. It is also recommended that the forthcoming report on Notification of Public Meetings be discussed in conjunction with the public discussion of this report.

There are some planning situations within the purview of the Planning and Development Department for which the Planning Act does not require a participatory process. Council should formally recognize procedures to be followed - even though they will be discretionary and infrequent - when dealing with Development Review, rezoning and Committee of Adjustment applications as outlined in this report. Similarly, procedures should be adopted for site or area-specific and City-wide restrictive by-laws other than rezonings.

Any or all of the participatory methods outlined in this report should be employed in the various planning and implementation situations which exist in Toronto.

The adoption of this report should not result in any additional staff requirements. However, if in carrying out the proposed procedures it becomes clear that more staff is needed, this issue will have to be addressed. If all of the recommendations in this report are adopted, the staff implications of the proposed procedures should be monitored for the period of one year by the Departments affected.

This report should be sent for comment to other City Departments and the public at large. Public discussion should follow the process outlined.

A final report should recommend Official Plan statements on Public Participation in Planning, additional City Council policies and a "handbook" on public participation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That this report, with a request for comments, be made available to groups and individuals on the Planning Board's mailing lists and to those who have, in the past, expressed an interest to be involved in the project on public participation in planning.

2. That the Planning Board hold a public meeting to discuss this report and that the Commissioner of Planning and Development be requested to report on the date for such a meeting at the Board's regular meeting on March 1, 1982.

3. That the Commissioner of Planning and Development be authorized to consult with other City Departments on the procedures suggested in this report.

4. That following the public meeting and the consultation with other City Departments, the Commissioner of Planning and Development prepare a final report recommending:

   (a) Official Plan statements on Public Participation in Planning and Programme Implementation;

   (b) additional City Council policies on the subject;

   (c) the publication of a "handbook" on public participation in the City of Toronto.

Stephen G. McLaughlin,
Commissioner.

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POOR

QUALITY

ORIGINAL